United Nations E/2017/NGO/21

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 June 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 5
High-level segment

Statement submitted by Yakutia — Our Opinion, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

17-09379 (E) 090617

Please recycle

Statement

Eradicating poverty is a very important Sustainable Development Goal. Implementing indigenous rights can make great contributions to poverty eradication.

The world population now stands at seven billion inhabitants. There are more than 2,000 nations in the world. Consider the situation as an example of Russia, one of the biggest countries in the world. Russia is multinational country with more than 190 nations.

Unfortunately, Russia did not endorse of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Russian authorities only recognize rights of small-numbered indigenous peoples with less than 50,000 inhabitants but do not recognize rights of other indigenous peoples with more than 50,000 members, for example, Sakha people with about 400,000 members.

Sakha people live in the biggest Russia's subject — Republic Sakha (Yakutia). The small-numbered indigenous peoples Evenks, Evens, Yukaghirs, Chukchis, Russia's peoples Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars and others also live in Yakutia. This region exceeds the area of France by 5 times, Italy — 10 and England by 13 times.

Despite the existence of natural resources (diamonds, gold, oil, gas) majority of multinational people of Yakutia live in poverty. Yakutians do not receive tangible benefits from the resources extraction. Yakutia have many problems such as unfavourable ecological situation, alcoholism, suicide, crime.

Russian high-ranking officials lobby interests of the resource extraction companies that aim to minimize costs through non-payment of compensation to local population and refusal to finance activities to ensure industrial and environmental safety. It is one of main reasons for non-approval of UNDRIP.

It is important to note that international law on indigenous peoples does not infringe upon the rights of other peoples. Regrettably, Russia's federal authorities do not understand it.

But in Yakutia, the Constitutional court made a right and honourable decision. Constitutional court of Republic Sakha (Yakutia) adopted the Decision No.4-p of October 21, 2016 in the case the interpretation of the provisions of article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic Sakha (Yakutia).

The Decision stated that the territory of Yakutia is the native land and historical homeland of the Sakha people, the source of its economic well-being, unique cultural and linguistic identity, and the constitutional and legal status of the Republic Sakha (Yakutia) is a form of its socio-political and state-legal organization as a national community in the Russian state.

The decision was supported by the public organization "Somogo Kuus (United Force)" that protects economic, legal, ecological, political rights of indigenous people Sakha and other peoples in Yakutia.

In this statement, Chairman of the General Meeting of this organization Dmitri Dmitrievich Ivanov appeals to international community to influence on Russian authorities:

1. to recognize the status of indigenous people Sakha;
2. to approve the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and

3. to implement the rights of indigenous people Sakha in according to provisions of international law on indigenous peoples.

NGO Yakutia — Our Opinion supports this appeal of Dmitri Ivanov and urges the United Nations bodies and stakeholders to compel Russian Federation to respect the rights of all indigenous peoples that live in Russia.